



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff **Scott Mittelstadt** Chief Deputy

Due diligence and patience needed in difficult cases.

In recent months you may have heard about investigations and arrests surrounding patrons and employees at gentlemen's clubs in Dodge County. The sheriff's office has been diligently working on these investigations. I feel that it is important that the public be made aware of these incidents that are occurring. I must also be careful about how much information is released to the public to ensure the integrity of these investigations that are ongoing.

In response to some of the public releases, I have been asked how these establishments are able to keep their liquor licenses in the midst of all the activities that are going on. Chapter 125 of Wisconsin Statutes governs liquor licenses including when and how they can be issued, suspended or revoked. Each year the local village board, city council or town board issues liquor licenses to qualifying establishments based on their local ordinances and state statute. The local governing authority must also ensure that there is good legal basis before making any decisions not to issue or renew. Without that legal basis and solid ground to stand on, lawsuits can be filed and create expensive litigation many times ending poorly if not done correctly.

When an establishment does step out of line there are processes in place for suspensions and revocation. When this occurs, the process can be lengthy as investigations need to be completed and due process must be followed to ensure the rights of the business are upheld. Statute dictates that a resident of the municipality must issue a complaint with the governing authority. Following the complaint, the resident must have all facts ready to be presented to the governing authority at a hearing and the owner of the liquor license must also have the opportunity to defend himself. It is recommended that the resident be represented by an attorney through this process. The governing authority then has the burden to make the decision after hearing the facts.

So the question still remains why does it take so long for a liquor license holder stepping out of bounds to have their licenses suspended or revoked? The answer to that question is complicated. The easiest way I can answer it is that it takes time to ensure the best case is put together by the complainant prior to making a complaint against a liquor license holder. When investigations are active by law enforcement agencies, those details are not always immediately available until the conclusion of the criminal case in the court. That is the hang up in the current cases as there are current charges pending in which details are not yet available for release to the public.

I can assure the public that there are individuals ready to act at such time as adequate information becomes available. While there has been concern over the inappropriate and illegal conduct occurring at these establishments, it is important for the citizens to

remember that our best chance of success is to be patient and ensure that processes are done the right way, the first time.

I ask the public be patient as we work through these processes, but rest assured that it is my priority to ensure the safety of the men and women who are victimized by sex trafficking and human trafficking in addition to the drug and other criminal activity that has been occurring. I ask the community to continue to report illegal and suspicious activity and together we can work to ensure that Dodge County remains a safe and enjoyable place to live work and visit.

Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt